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BOSTON SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERSFOUNDED 1848

PROCEEDINGS

PAPER IN THIS NUMBER.

"Labor Problems of To-day." E. A. Johnson, James Gauld, William Stanley Parker, Morton C. Tuttle and Chas. R. Gow.

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MINUTES OF MEETING.

BOSTON, November 16, 1921.

The regular meeting of the Boston Society of Civil Engineers was held this evening in Chipman Hall, Tremont Temple, and was called to order at 8.00 o'clock by the first Vice-President, Frank M. Gunby.

There were 154 members and guests present.

The minutes of the meeting of October 19 were read and approved.

The chairman announced that the Board of Government had elected the following to membership in the grades named:

Member — Mr. Richard S. Holmgren.

Juniors — Messrs. Karle H. Aimo, Earle C. Allen, Henry Brask, Harold S. Cook, Charles S. Cooper, John J. Cummings, Joseph V. Cundari, Allen S. Dawe, Elmore L. Dearborn, Herbert C. Dixon, Joseph B. Fitzpatrick, George E. Foisie, Joseph P. Furrier, Alfred Gargaro, Maurice Grushky, Harold W. Hale,

Arthur E. Harding, David J. Kenney, Guy S. Longstroth, Elmer F. Low, John P. McManus, David C. Milne, Howard T. Pearce, Carl R. Pearson, Irving Rosenblatt, Alan M. Thompson, Harold C. Thompson, Arthur L. Wilcox, Lawrence V. Willey and Edwin C. Williams.

The Vice-President presented a memoir of Roy C. Aiken, prepared by Mr. John L. Howard. Mr. Aiken died on June 24, 1921.

On motion of Mr. Frederic I. Winslow, the following vote, passed at the last meeting, was passed a second time, as required by the By-Laws, by a unanimous vote:

"Voted: That the Board of Government be authorized to use the income from the Permanent Fund to meet current expenses to such an extent as they deem necessary."

The chairman then introduced the speakers of the evening. Mr. E. A. Johnson, secretary of the Building Trades Council; Mr. James Gauld, Carpenters' District Council; Mr. William Stanley Parker, architect; Mr. Morton C. Tuttle, of the Abertaw Construction Company, and Mr. Charles R. Gow, of the Charles R. Gow Company, who talked on "Labor Problems of To-day." The papers were followed by a discussion in which the speakers and Messrs. Metcalf, Larned, Sampson, Snow and Spofford took part.

Adjourned.

RICHARD K. HALE, *Acting Secretary.*

APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP.

[December 15, 1921.]

The By-Laws provide that the Board of Government shall consider applications for membership with reference to the eligibility of each candidate for admission and shall determine the proper grade of membership to which he is entitled.

The Board must depend largely upon the members of the Society for the information which will enable it to arrive at a just conclusion. Every member is therefore urged to communi-

cate promptly any facts in relation to the personal character or professional reputation and experience of the candidates which will assist the Board in its consideration. Communications relating to applicants are considered by the Board as strictly confidential.

The fact that applicants give the names of certain members as reference does not necessarily mean that such members endorse the candidate.

The Board of Government will not consider applications until the expiration of twenty (20) days from the date given.

BURKE, GEORGE L., Norwood, Mass. (Age 21, b. Norwood, Mass.) Student at Northeastern College. April to Nov., 1917, was draftsman with Geo. H. Morrill Co.; Nov., 1917, to Nov., 1918, transitman with the town of Norwood; Nov., 1918, to April, 1919, with the U. S. Army; April, 1919, to Sept., 1920, transitman with town of Norwood: from Sept., 1920, to date, at college. Refers to H. B. Alvord, C. S. Ell, C. R. Gow, A. L. Maddox and G. A. Smith.

DARY, EROL GAY, Hyde Park, Mass. (Age 26, b. Taunton, Mass.) Educated in public schools, Bryant & Stratton Commercial School, Rhode Island School of Design, Franklin Union and Lowell Institute; 1913, Hood Rubber Co., power plant drafting; 1914, United Illuminating Co., New Haven, steam power plant layouts and inspection of construction; 1915, machine detailing and design at Norfolk Downs; 1916, with Stone & Webster, structural steel and concrete drafting; 1917, B. & M. R. R., steel, concrete and timber bridge drafting; 1918, with Stone & Webster again, also was in chemical warfare service, U. S. Army; 1919, at Watertown Arsenal, building design and construction; 1920, with C. B. Roberts Engrg. Co., in charge of structural design and drafting on the plant of the N. E. Oil Refining Co., at Fall River, Mass.; 1921, with Leonard Engrg. Co., on large concrete oil storage tanks at the Beacon Oil Co., Everett, Mass. Refers to W. W. Clifford, C. M. Durgin, H. A. Gray, P. Jones and E. D. Mortenson.

FLOOD, FRANK LEE, Framingham, Mass. (Age 24, b. Framingham, Mass.) Graduate of Framingham High School in 1915, and now a student at Northeastern College, department of civil engineering. Transitman with William H. Punchard, landscape architect, 1916-17; in the U. S. Army from April, 1917, to May, 1919; transitman and assistant engineer with Commission of Water Supply Resources since Oct., 1920. Now attending fourth year at the Northeastern College, and doing coöperative work as assistant engineer with the Commission on Water Supply Resources. Refers to H. B. Alvord, C. S. Ell, N. L. Hammond, A. S. Weston and E. Wright.

MURDOUGH, EDWIN BENNETT, Dorchester, Mass. (Age 23, b. Dorchester, Mass.) Graduated from Mass. Inst. of Tech. in 1920. Employed by the M. P. R. R. at Atchison, Kan., as rodman from July to Nov., 1920; at present

with Metcalf & Eddy, as assistant engineer. Refers to F. S. Bailey, C. E. Carter, C. B. Breed, C. W. Rolfe, A. L. Shaw and C. M. Spofford.

NIGHTINGALE, WINTHROP E., Watertown, Mass. (Age 27, b. Rockland, Mass.) Graduate of Boston Latin School in 1911, and Harvard College, A.B., in 1915. Sept., 1915, to Feb., 1916, instrumentman for P. C. Nash, then of Watertown; deck officer U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, March to June, 1916; resident inspector, Mass. Highway Commission, to Jan., 1917; draftsman, Kalmus, Comstock & Westcott, to Feb., 1917; Mass. Inst. of Tech., Feb., 1917, to June, 1918; Boston Park and Recreation Dept., Engineering Division, July, 1917, to June, 1918; U. S. N. R. F., June, 1918, to Feb., 1919; with Lockwood, Greene & Co., Oct., 1919, to July, 1920; Mass. Highway, Division of Public Works, Oct., 1920, to March, 1921; director of engineering practice at Northeastern College, March, 1921, to date. Refers to A. B. Appleton, C. S. Ell, H. J. Hughes, L. J. Johnson, C. M. Spofford, P. W. Taylor.

NYMAN, CHESTER LOVERING, Marlboro, Mass. (Age 20, b. Marlboro, Mass.) Studied at Northeastern College, civil engineering course, 1918. Worked half of 1919 with H. W. Punchard, landscape architect; with the State Department of Health, 1920, as transitman and chief of party; during summer and fall of 1921 was with the State Highway Commission at Beverly,—this included inspection and engineering on concrete, gravel and bituminous road construction. At present is a transitman with the Highway Commission in connection with studies at Northeastern College. Refers to H. B. Alvord, C. S. Ell, N. L. Hammond, A. P. Rice, A. D. Weston, E. Wright.

OAKMAN, ROGER GORDON, Neponset, Mass. (Age 20, b. Boston, Mass.) A graduate of Mechanic Arts High School, Boston, 1920; entered Northeastern College, School of Engineering, in Sept., 1920,—is now a sophomore. Since July, 1920, has worked with C. H. Gannett, alternating five weeks working and five weeks at college. Refers to H. B. Alvord, C. S. Ell, C. H. Gannett and J. E. Stone.

PARSONS, ALFRED DYER, Melrose, Mass. (Age 22, b. West Medford, Mass.) Graduate of Melrose High School in 1916, then took a post-graduate course and entered Mass. Inst. of Tech., in 1917, attending for about three years, and then entered Northeastern College. Has worked at different engineering jobs and kept up his civil engineering course at Northeastern. This is his senior year. Is now with the State Highway during the work periods. Refers to H. B. Alvord, J. B. Babcock, 3d, C. S. Ell, A. G. Robbins.

RIGGIO, SAMUEL ADAMS, Boston, Mass. (Age 20, b. Ivoryton, Conn.) Graduate of Pratt High School, Essex, Conn., June, 1920. Entered Northeastern College in Sept., 1920, and is now a sophomore. Refers to H. B. Alvord, C. S. Ell, C. R. Gow and N. L. Hammond.

STOTZ, HERMAN CHRISTIAN, Brighton, Mass. (Age 18, b. Boston, Mass.) Graduate of Mechanic Arts High School, 1920; entered Northeastern College in Sept. of 1920 and is now a sophomore. During the work periods, of five weeks each has been employed by the Commission of Water Supply for the State of Massachusetts. Refers to H. B. Alvord, C. S. Ell, C. R. Gow and N. L. Hammond.

LIST OF MEMBERS.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS.

CRANDALL, JAMES S.	25 East St., Melrose, Mass.
FEAR, HOLBERT W.	31 Chestnut St., Gloversville, N. Y.
LINCOLN, EDWIN H.	46 Cornhill, Boston, Mass.
NEGUS, ARTHUR I.	Damariscotta Mills, Me.
PEABODY, DEAN, JR.	Room 1-302, M. I. T., Cambridge, Mass.
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WORCESTER, ROBERT J. H., care Lockwood, Greene & Co.,	60 Federal St., Boston 9, Mass.

ADDITIONS.

CURRIER, GEORGE W.	602 City Hall Annex, Boston, Mass.
FOISIE, GEORGE E., Northeastern College, 316 Huntington Ave.,	Boston, Mass.
HOLMGREN, RICHARD S.	32 Pleasant View Ave., E. Lynn, Mass.
KENT, ROBERT W.	29 Morseland Ave., Newton Center, Mass.

DEATH.

BAKER, WILLIAM E.	November 7, 1921
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LIBRARY NOTES.

RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY.

U. S. Government Reports.

Annual Report, Governor of Panama Canal. 1921.

State Reports.

Massachusetts. Annual Report of Highway Commission.
1917 and 1918.

New York. Annual Report State Dept. of Health. Vols.
1 and 2.

New York. Annual Report Public Service Commission.
1917.

Municipal Reports.

Boston, Mass. Annual Report City Planning Board. 1920.

Marlborough, Mass. Annual Report Water and Sewage Commissioners. 1920.

Philadelphia, Pa. Annual Report City Transit. 1920.

Miscellaneous.

Bulletin 564. Dept. of Mines, Canada.

Index to Transactions, American Society Civil Engrs. Vols.

1-83.

Transactions, American Society Civil Engrs. Vol. 84.

Waste in Industry. F. A. E. S. 1921.

BOSTON SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS
FOUNDED 1848

PAPERS AND DISCUSSIONS

This Society is not responsible for any statement made or opinion expressed in its publications

LABOR PROBLEMS OF TO-DAY.

By E. A. JOHNSON, PRES. BUILDING TRADES COUNCIL, AND
JAMES GAULD, CARPENTERS DISTRICT COUNCIL; WITH A
DISCUSSION BY WILLIAM STANLEY PARKER, ARCHITECT,
AND MORTON C. TUTTLE AND CHARLES R. GOW, MEMBERS
BOSTON SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS.

(Presented November 16, 1921.)

E. A. JOHNSON.*

I HAD hoped that Mr. Parker, who represents the architects, the prime movers in the Building Congress, would be called upon to speak first, so that he might give you a brief synopsis of our activities and what we have tried to accomplish in the Building Congress. However, labor is first on the job and last to leave, so we will begin the job here.

The problems that confront the building industry is the subject for to-night. The problems that have confronted us in the past are history to all of us. Naturally we should be most concerned with what vitally confronts and interests us at the present time, but I shall have to go back a little, in order to arrive at my subject by steps, and I shall go back to 1919.

Conditions in the building industry at that time, between the Employers' Association and the units that composed the building trade unions, were of an individual nature. That is,

* 386 Harrison Avenue, Boston, Mass.

the individual trades, crafts and callings of the local unions had individual agreements with their individual employers. The master plumbers had agreements with the Plumbers' union, the master steam fitters with the Steam Fitters' union, and so on down the list. In April, 1919, two trades struck for an increase in wages. These were followed by two or more trades in May. The other trades stayed on the job, though in some cases they had to knock off owing to the fact that the work was cut down. Then there was brought about a conference with all of the trades in the industry, by invitation of Mayor Peters. They met at City Hall, and nobody had in mind when we had our first meeting that we were going to enter into a new agreement in the industry. I know such a thought was far removed from my mind, and I have heard others say the same thing. Boston seems to have been the pioneer city to start movements of a new nature. We met on about twenty or twenty-one days, and the result of our meetings was what we now call, in communications and conferences, the June 27, 1919, agreement. That agreement was, as I say, a radical departure from the agreements that had been in force. It provided for two parties to the agreement, — the Building Trades Employers' Association and the United Building Trades Council. It provided for an arbitration board, and I can say that it eliminated the disputes which were previously a bugbear — troubles which were virtually union-made, where a man struck against his fellow-unionist on the job. We had the arbitration board take care of anything new not decided by the National Board or covered by it. There was only one dispute, during that agreement, which wasn't settled amicably. That happened on the tag end of the agreement, and possibly would have been rectified if there had been more time. Public hearings were held under the auspices of the State Board of Arbitration, and majorities of both groups considered that the agreement was satisfactory; although all felt that it could have been bettered, as can anything perfected to such a stage.

In October, 1919, as the agreement provided, notices were given by both sides that they were desirous of changes in any new agreement consummated. The Building Trades Council, as everybody knows, put in a request for \$1.50 per hour. That

is history. I merely mention the fact in justice to the trade unions, that we did ask for the \$1.50 an hour. Many would like to be getting it now. For this reason we asked for it. The press did not give any space as to why we asked for the \$1.50 an hour.

In 1919 we had signed the new general agreement, under which the rate of pay was uniform and \$1 an hour for all mechanics in the building industry. Simultaneously, in surrounding cities and towns wages of \$1.05, \$1.15, \$1.20 an hour were paid. They virtually "rode on the wave." As far out as Newton, 5c. more than in Boston was received; in Lynn, 12½c. more; in New Bedford, 15c. more an hour; in Springfield, 25c. more an hour. Naturally, during the year and a half the agreement was in force, the mechanics in Boston asked, "Are we as good as those in other cities and towns? Doesn't it cost us as much to live?" And so we set our standard of request for wage increase from what we saw in surrounding places; and it must be remembered that in October of 1920 the cost of living, as shown by index figures in the report of the Commission on the Necessaries of Life, at the State House, reached the highest point in the history of the country, — I believe 220 points. That led us to consider it best to ask for \$1.50, with the hope of possibly striking a point between \$1 and \$1.50. This request was not continued very long after the strike, or the lockout, as it may be termed, went into effect. The newspapers have never given the facts to the public in the form I have given them to you to-night. Only two or three months ago a newspaper printed an editorial, "What has become of the building trade strike?" and reiterated the \$1.50 wage demand, as in their opinion we were still striving for the \$1.50. So the public's mind has been bewildered.

At the present time there is no agreement existing in the city of Boston. Conditions are catch as catch can. Some say open shop prevails, and naturally our side claims we are holding our own. It is needless to go into details here to show you why and how we are holding our own. We have lived through a business depression, through economic conditions forced upon us during the last year, and have not lost members—to any greater extent than have other trades where similar industrial de-

pressions have occurred. Unions have come to stay, and even if "open shop" is seriously being put forward, as claimed by employers, nevertheless the building unions are still going to be with us.

We have endeavored to secure conferences with the Employers' Association, without results. That is, we have had one informal conference with executives of the Building Trades Employers' Association, and another through the invitation of the Boston Society of Architects, who felt that possibly if one of the five wheels to the coach, as it might be termed, intervened, it was possible something might result, and up to date the only result has been that the Employers' Association has made the provision that the Building Trades Council present a 100 per cent. front before they can enter into negotiations with it. In this connection I want to say that in 1919, when the new general agreement was entered into, there were two or three units connected with the Building Trades Council that would not enter into the new general agreement, so that this is a new demand or an innovation from the employers' side. The elevator constructors in 1919 were not party to the agreement but were part of the Building Trades Council. The sprinkler trades union was not party to the agreement but was part of the Council. Now the employers' request that we be 100 per cent. strong. Previously, owing to a strike, we lost one of our units in the building industry. We unseated them as a disciplinary measure, and they withdrew. It is our endeavor to enact disciplinary measures against any unit that refuses to live up to our rules. During the strike, or lockout, another unit in the building industry withdrew, also because of discipline. This time it withdrew because the majority wished arbitration and a small minority did not. I bring that out to show you that there is a conservative element in the building industry. We endeavor to do business, and police any negotiations with the thought that they shall be lived up too.

With the fact, however, that the two crafts are out of the Council it is impossible at this time to live up to the requirements of the employers, who say that before entering into negotiations they must meet us 100 per cent. strong. If the employers desire 100 per cent. representation, the unions also desire it. Possibly

conditions may have changed since the make-up of the Employers' Association, but they did lack a number of the crafts, — the stone cutters, tile layers, and others; and if the Employers' Association is going to block the wheels of progress by standing out for something they can't fulfill themselves, naturally we cannot get on a peace basis until we both agree to go in on equal ground.

We also question whether the general agreement is the best form. Many unions feel that it is dangerous to enter into a general form of agreement, and those of us who hold positions as officers of the unions have to allay these fears, if possible. Many feel there is no ground for it except for the purpose of getting into negotiations to find what the other fellow has to offer.

Many unions hold further to this particular point of view. In 1919 the agreement was an individual agreement existing between the individual trade and the individual employer, and when the new form in 1919 came into effect the individual forms of agreement that maintained the conference boards, etc., were addenda to the new general agreement. Now at present, as far as we can interpret the meaning of the new agreement of the Employers' Association, it is all-embracing. Many trades are jealous of their relations with their employers, and they feel there is a danger in entering a combine where a large group is going to determine wage questions, etc. They want that point cleared up. They want the relationship undisturbed. They want assurance that the relations they have had with their employers in the past will remain unchanged. It is the thought of many representatives of labor that until we can get into conference around the table nothing will come from letter-writing or anything else. This is just as true now as in 1919. Then we had no thought that we might get into a conference and come out with something entirely different. Men have been known to change their minds.

In general I want to say, getting away from the relations that exist at the present time, that labor's point of view has not been put before you, I believe, in the proper light. You depend on the newspapers, as we do to a greater or less extent. A week ago last night I had the pleasure of attending a meeting of the Boston Society of Architects, and after talking for over an

hour I excused myself, saying that I didn't realize I had talked so long. One man said, "I am glad you did, because we very rarely hear the point of view of labor." Possibly it is the same here, as I do not know how long it is since a labor man came before you. But it is my right and duty to put one thing before you to-night, and that is the fact that labor does not get the audiences that it should, and that contact is not established in a proper way. We allow separate groups to get together, and a fair example of this is the so-called Building Trades Investigation conducted recently by the Boston Chamber of Commerce. I quote a bulletin issued by the Chamber of Congress where, under the name of Messrs. Stewart and McConnel, it was stated that "the faults of labor are always apparent," and it went on to say that it mustn't be construed that this investigation was undertaken to try to lay stress on the faults of labor. The reason they didn't mention specifically the other parts of the industry was because they had not been able to get these groups together. I want to say that a month or a month and a half before this investigation, Mr. Penanski came to our office and we gave all the information and help we possibly could, and afterwards every one of our representatives went to that congress and gave information. We went of our own free will, and gave that information, and that is the position labor has always been in since I have been connected with the organization. Information did not have to be ferreted out. I wonder that, if a labor organization decided to hold an investigation, how many gentlemen representing the various industries would be present without being subpoenaed. I doubt whether any of the interests in Boston would have attended any labor hearing.

Through the Building Congress we have endeavored to establish points of contact; have endeavored to have the different groups in the industry get together, so we might learn from one another just where the shoe pinched the most. I have found some gentlemen in different parts of the industry who do not look with favor upon architects mingling with or endeavoring to bring together the employer and employee. I also believe they would look on with as much disfavor if the Boston Society of Civil Engineers assumed the same rôle. I have heard the opin-

ion expressed that the architect was an academic fellow, even an esthetic fellow, and shouldn't want to have anything to do with labor. That is a wrong conception. There isn't a unit in the industry that isn't directly concerned with the labor situation. If you are going to adopt the attitude of onlookers and stand on the side lines and leave it to the two groups to scrap it out, you must be satisfied and not complain afterwards.

During the congress, the investigation and the strike, or lock-out, editorials were printed criticizing rules; and the engineer, the investment broker and the owner criticized and asked, "Where do they get these rules? Who ever gave them the right to have these rules?" They criticized and wrote editorials, and where we would get 10c. worth of space they would get \$5 000 worth. And still some of you assume the attitude that nobody but the employer or employee should be allowed to get together to adjust their differences. Now it should be realized that you are interested in labor, — and the architect and the engineer ought to be, and that you should endeavor to at least bring about a common understanding between the employer and the employee, because if not directly in contact with labor through the employers, still you are affected by the bad conditions that might be agreed upon between the employer and the employee, and are affected if no agreements enter into the industry. If the architect or engineer has supervision of a job and a strike occurs, the owner comes to him when the work is held up for any appreciable period, and then there are conferences in the architect's or the engineer's offices and a merely temporary settlement is patched up. And do you know, gentlemen, that through the fact that you have stood aloof and allowed temporary settlements to be made on your particular job, you are responsible for some of the conditions existing at the present time? You have been so anxious for temporary agreements to tide over a temporary condition. For instance, an engineer has an attachment on his engine and wants straight time on an eight-hour day. And then he wants two hours more. Well, you say, give it to him. And that becomes a law. So it is true that you are at least partly responsible for bringing about some of the rules that exist at the present time and of which you complain. I am going to digress again.

I am not a churchy fellow. There is no halo around my head. But there has been a lot said about the Golden Rule in industry, and in recent days I have served on committees with churchmen and have heard a lot about the Golden Rule in industry. I have seen ministers adopt the garb of the workingman in order to get his point of view, and while the papers have played it up spectacularly, all the ministers I have met *had* the point of view; all they needed was the contact with coöperative labor, and they got that contact and desired to continue that contact, and many business men have desired the same thing. The trouble is, we are all out of focus. We are all organized for our own particular end and neglect the man next to us. There are wheels within wheels, but no interrelation with one another. We are constantly slipping cogs, and will continue to do so until we all get together and do not allow two groups to stand on the side line, and "may the best man win." These results when summed up are going to affect you all just the same.

JAMES GAULD.*

The task that is being put to labor to-night is a hard one, on account of the fact that there are so many evils connected with our industry, and they do not all rest with any one particular element of our industry. My colleague, Mr. Johnson, has covered a period where a great amount of harmony existed — a period of practically two years. Many of us here can look back over a period when conditions were not so harmonious. We all recollect the time when the builder, the owner and the architect had little or no knowledge as to when he would be in a position to deliver or to get his building for occupancy. In that day organized labor was looked upon as being responsible for that condition, and, in fact, as an unnecessary element in society. From that day it has been the aim and effort of the conservative element of labor to eliminate all those conditions. And we felt that we had accomplished something for the best interest of the industry in this city when we signed that last agreement. Much effort was required on the part of our rep-

* 30 Hanover Street, Boston, Mass.

representatives to have their membership accept that agreement, for the simple reason that many of the features were looked upon with a measure of suspicion. One of the features that was looked upon with a great deal of suspicion was the termination of that agreement. We had to put it up to hundreds of hungry men as to the necessity of terminating that agreement on January 1, because we wanted to be a party to the stabilizing of our industry, by giving our contractors an opportunity to figure their work and to begin the season at a time when we felt we could adjust the conditions so that everybody would be satisfied. To-day we are confronted with an element in our organization that is over-suspicious, and says that our representatives did not tell the truth, in that their judgment was bad because they led us into a position where we were being taken advantage of by the association on account of climatic conditions. Consequently we are confronted with a membership that has no faith in the termination date from a stabilizing standpoint.

Our conservative element has endeavored, right straight along, to bring about a condition far from what it is to-day, and unless we can get the coöperation of societies similar to this and our associates in other sections of our industry, we are not going to be able much longer to hold the conservative element in power. Our organizations are fast becoming organizations of opportunists, and the present conditions are giving them ample opportunity to preach within the ranks doctrines far from idealism or Americanism. The various disinterested elements in our industry, as I see them, are, — First the engineers, with whom we have lost all direct contact. Then we have the architects, who are also far removed from direct contact with labor, and they are the fellows who lead us into a maze with their meager specifications, and create, in many instances, jurisdictional disputes. Then we have the contractor who has lost the old-fashioned contact with his employee, — the man who now knows his employee by number; which makes it necessary to deal with labor through direct contact with professional representatives. Labor in many instances is assailed for things for which they are not directly responsible. We are looked upon in many instances as an element composed mostly of destructionists, for the simple reason

that seldom do you pause to get into direct contact with the representatives of the labor-union element and find out what it is all about. The previous speaker cited the fact that we policed the agreement. That is an absolute fact, and how many of you here that know we deviated from the usual procedure to the extent of proposing to censure to the extent of striking against one of the parties to the agreement that did not live up to it? We seldom get an opportunity to lay those things before the interested parties, and it is my hope that we may get opportunity here to-night to analyze each section of our industry and find out of just what we are accused. Seldom do we get an opportunity like this, and that is why we should avail ourselves of it. Probably few of you realize that we are in a peculiar position just now. Our membership, which is cosmopolitan to a great extent, is leaning towards other channels where it feels it may get relief from the present conditions. We find that we have the contractor to-day that is taking full advantage of the situation and of the supply of labor. He is at present paying just as little as he possibly can. That may be one way of solving the situation in relation to the cost of building or a bigger profit for himself, but I want to tell you candidly that that action is going to bring about this result: The men will neither listen to reason or anything else when the opportunity arrives. When they see that the time is ripe they are going to be in a position to demand, and they are going to demand, their full share. Now that is a condition that we can remedy if the various elements of this industry will get interested in it and will get busy to the extent of helping to solve our troubles. We find that another great evil during the times of peace is the division of authority. In other words, we find that when grievances arise on the work, where we feel that injustice has been done, we are passed from one element to another, none of them willing to assume the responsibility for the situation. Sometimes we feel that the architect could eliminate considerable of that trouble. He allows the owner to reserve the right to get figures on his subcontracts, and he will invariably attempt to mix up union and non-union men. That immediately means trouble. Those elements will not mix with any degree of satisfaction, either to the contractor or to the

laborer or to the owner. Consequently we feel that in some acceptable society, possibly this new-found Congress, we will be able to get together and try to have these various grievances eliminated. Some of us feel that we could get away from lots of grievances if we could get away from the old form of contract. Now we feel that labor is going to subscribe to any of these things if we can be assured our rights will be protected. We also feel that we should no longer be allowed to break our connections with our employers. We feel to-day, regarding this trouble of many weeks, that the entire thing could have been averted had some other element stepped in. Consequently, we feel that if at any other future time any element sees that the Employers' Association and the organized bodies of labor are at a breaking point, it is then that element's duty to step in and patch up our troubles and keep us at work. The last strike has demonstrated that to us within the ranks of labor, and probably the Association will see it in the same light.

Now, Mr. Chairman, there has been another feature that I feel we should all get busy on. As self-respecting American citizens we should take at all times the opportunity of curbing any other form of aggregation of workmen other than the recognized and acceptable form of the American Federation of Trade Unions. There is gradually, but surely, coming to the surface an element of radicalism, and it will not be the element that I represent that will be affected mostly by its control. It will be the parties that will have to deal with this radical branch of our citizenship. It may not have been forcibly brought to your attention, gentlemen, but there is no organization in the building industry that is free from radicalism to-day, and the conditions that are going on are fostering that spirit to the extent that we feel before very long that we, the buffer element within our organizations, will be no more. You will have an element that will not agree to anything. The time is now to stay it. They are already flouting before the officials that there are write-ups in every official building journal and editorials in the press portraying that the time for building has arrived, and that in the very near future our industry will be back to normal condition. Consequently that element is already advocating

that we should deal with no association, and I am hoping you will use your influence to bring about a healthier condition by immediately starting negotiations for a new agreement.

Now I feel that coming here and advocating our cause would be of such a lengthy nature that I think it would be far better that we should hear of the misdeeds of labor and be given an opportunity to defend our action to the best of our ability. Consequently I am unprepared to go into any great detail to present anything other than what I have just now said.

All I want to do is to ask this Society to interest themselves in our industry and see if they can't get it back to a healthy condition, because, just as sure as I am standing here to-night, so long as we "dillydally," conditions as I portray to you will exist.

DISCUSSION.

WILLIAM STANLEY PARKER.*

I am very glad to be here. This platform is as ample as the platform printed in your notice. I was glad to find that it was not a political platform, but one that one could not only get on but could stand on for the purpose of stating anything one might want to say.

The topic, "Labor Problems of the Industry," might be equally truly stated if the first word were eliminated; if it read just "Problems of the Industry," because labor problems really touch and are a fundamental part of all the problems, not only of labor but of all groups that represent the industry. I suppose in one word we might say that to-day the present problem of labor, or the general problem, is work. If we could get some work we might solve some of our problems, and if we got too much we might create some others, because one of the problems of the industry to-day is, where is the labor? Why is it that in an open-shop city like Los Angeles the plasterers have a union wage, I think, of \$8 a day; and are getting \$12 and \$15, and in New York the same story, in England the same story? Where are the plasterers? Why haven't new ones come into the field, and is it

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the problem of the contractor and the labor group to solve? Are they the only two elements in the labor industry interested to find out why plasterers are not coming into the field, and how to remedy that condition? Personally, if I as an architect can't get my building built, I am going to do anything that will help the situation. I consider that difficulty is my business. At present I know very little about it, because I haven't come into contact with the men in the building industry. I do feel that in the past there has been too little coöperation among the various elements in the industry. For the reason of that lack of contact I think I have failed to give really any particular attention to one of the problems in the industry, and that is, periodic or seasonal unemployment; which seems to be one of the very definite problems not only in the building industry but of a great many other industries. Apparently it occurs in the shoe industry, as in the building industry, though perhaps there it is more a question of style than actual weather; but seasonable lack of employment appears to be just as great there, if not greater than in the building industry.

We made that the first subject of our Building Congress discussion, feeling that there was a common point of interest we might well look into, and without any very great expense or delay in finding the facts. We found, however, that the facts, as you engineers would consider them facts, didn't exist. We could find no records in the industry here regarding seasonal unemployment. The only thing we could do was to take the general impressions of labor and their general experience in regard to the seasons when their men were all busy and seasons when they had a great many on the settees who wanted a position. From them we got that general information as a first step, giving the months when all the men were employed in the industry and the months when they were not generally employed, and the percentage of unemployment that existed in the different trades. From this information we worked out rough curves which varied according to the trade and its relation to the industry. I want to go into the question of just what that proportion of unemployment is. The percentage of unemployment in the various elements of the industry varies from 25 to 75 per cent. of the men.

We find, for instance, the painters and decorators, masons, and hoisting and portable engineers — the three most significant — drop to 25 per cent. employed for three or four months. So far as we can make out, they have no other form of income, except what they get out of this industry. We are told the reason is they do not know just when they will get a job. It is always "to-morrow." They prefer to work at their regular industry rather than take up something else. They never develop anything else because they do not know, for instance, from say December 31 to April 31, whether they are going to get a position or not. They have practically no support, therefore, except from their own industry. What is the reaction of that fact on the wages, for instance? Consider the painters and decorators — the 2 700 men in the union ranks. They have an average, apparently, of something like 60 per cent. employment during the year. When you turn your dollar or 90c., or even the \$1.50 asked for at a certain period into 60 per cent. yearly employment, you find out what the average man gets in yearly income, and the man is paid by the week but he lives by the year.

These facts were brought out strikingly in New York, where the same problems exist as here only multiplied ten times. As a matter of fact, they are just about one to ten in the case of the painters. About 25 000 were employed for five months and the rest of the year about 5 000. The rest were only partly employed. Now that is our problem, — as much ours as that of labor. We can't get good work from men employed 50 per cent. of the time. We can't get either good work or good citizenship out of that sort of man. Isn't that our problem as well as the problem of the industry? As much as it is labor's problem? So, it seems to me, on all of these problems we cannot but agree, as soon as we get into a study of the problems, — the contractor's problem, the subcontractor's problem, etc., — with good old Sir Roger de Coverley, "that much could be said on both sides." It was that thought that led to the formation of the Building Congress. The trouble, it seems to me, is, as was stated the other day at a meeting in Indianapolis, by the editor of the *Journal of the American Institute of Architects*, who was called on to speak at the final meeting there. He said he felt that one of the greatest prob-

lems of to-day was cleaning up the channels of information; that the means of getting at the facts of the case were so clogged by interest — some special interest or expedient or policy — that one doesn't know really what to believe. You would read in this or that paper diametrically opposed statements. At the time of the last strike here there appeared diametrically opposed statements from the employers and labor. I venture to say that none of us could really form our own opinion accurately, because none of us really knew the facts. And so, in order to clear away the obstructions that have been interposed between the various elements in the industry, that have prevented their getting into close touch and finding out the other fellow's point of view, we formed this Building Congress.

It was started by the American Institute of Architects, which called a meeting at Atlantic City a little over a year ago. At this meeting there were present a number of architects, engineers, contractors, subcontractors, representatives of labor, and material men. This meeting was unanimous in believing that the formation of a Building Congress as proposed was a wise move, as no other existing organization embraced all elements of the industry.

The national group had some preliminary meetings, and developed its scheme of organization. They felt, however, that the problems were primarily subjects for local solutions, and that the national body could not be reasonably effective until a group of local bodies had become active.

Local groups were started almost simultaneously about a year ago in New York and Boston. We called a preliminary meeting here, which believed that the movement should be developed, and at this meeting there were present representatives of all the eight groups in the industry, as follows: Architects, engineers, contractors, subcontractors, material producers, material distributors, labor, and building investment. A first organizing committee of eight was appointed, one from each of these groups.

After preliminary discussion, this committee decided to increase its membership to twenty-four, three from each group, and this enlarged membership has been active ever since in developing the work of the Congress.

Your representatives in the Congress are, — Colonel Gow, Colonel Gunby and Mr. Fay. Perhaps I should say "Colonel Fay," for nowadays, scratch an engineer and one is apt to find a colonel.

We took up, first, the question of seasonal unemployment, as I have reported, and it is indeed a pretty hard nut to crack. At present we are engaged in discussing the functional relations of the various elements in the industry. I don't know whether this will lead to disarming or arming. We are certainly very frank. We are laying our cards face up on the table. We are not talking about ourselves but about the other fellows in the industry, giving our experiences of the difficulties we have run up against in dealing with the other elements, and endeavoring to find out why we function badly, and how we may correct the difficulties that we find so often exist. We are trying to find out why the different elements act as they do, and to learn their point of view through this close contact and frank discussion.

I hope you will all think kindly of this movement. Those of us who are trying to start it may not be able to put it through, but we are hoping to do so, and some time we may be in a position to come to you to back us up, and we hope then we shall have your help.

MORTON C. TUTTLE.*

The rise of the publicity adviser is a new thing in American advertising. Some of our big corporations, some of our important individuals, and occasionally an entire industry, has decided that it needs advice regarding the education of the public away from a critical and toward an appreciative attitude. It has been recognized that the appreciation of the public increases as a clearer understanding grows about certain features of the firm, the individual or the industry. One or two people have developed great ability in this process of establishing good understanding between such misunderstood individuals and the American public. I suspect that one of these very able individuals is now at work re-establishing the friendly relations between the

* Aberthaw Construction Company, 27 School Street, Boston, Mass.

public and the anthracite coal industry, because recently some very good advertisements have appeared, explaining, one at a time, various features of the coal situation that are not commonly borne in mind. I believe that during the past years some one has worked very intelligently with the Standard Oil Company's publicity, and as a result Standard Oil does not suffer the criticism that it inherited from past time.

These publicity advisers are far more than writers of advertisements. As a matter of fact, few of them touch the actual detail of the advertising, nor do they write the articles. They are paid for making a study of the activities, personalities and general relationships of the firms, individuals or industries, and from these studies determine what facts, properly told, will react favorably upon their client. Nor do they confine themselves alone to publicity matters, but advise as to changes of methods, new relationships and new methods of operation which will create favorable rather than unfavorable comment.

I believe that such advisers must have not only a clear, broad understanding of the principles and relationships involved, but must have the moral courage to reject many statements which would react favorably, simply because these statements are not strictly true, or because a statement which is strictly true is too involved to be readily understood.

In approaching a new problem, one of these publicity advisers must eagerly wish to make many statements which later he finds impossible to make. It must be interesting to approach a new problem, knowing that if certain things can be said broadly enough and pointedly enough, great good will result to the client.

In the past few days I have been following a whimsical line of thought — perhaps not practical — which has interested me: Supposing this audience were called in as publicity advisers for the American labor unions. What would we wish to say that would give the public a cordial appreciation of the American labor union? How many of the things that we wish to say could be said of the unions as they are conducted to-day? It may be interesting to think over some of the high points.

First, we should wish to explain that the organization of the American labor unions was a simple one. We should wish to say

this because any badly set up organization always works evil. There must not be complicated relationships, dual authorities or unknown limitations of authorities, because these will lead to misunderstanding, if not to evil. We should wish to say that the authorities of officers are clearly defined, and their agreements made within these authorities are binding and permanent.

Such a clean-cut organization would preclude the possibility of misapprehension as to the powers and authorities of any one except a responsible officer. The lines of organization would be so clearly marked that there would be no possibility that at the lines of a metropolitan district, at a state line, or through a tangling of authority between craft and federation, the agreement of such officer could act in any way except as the party of the second part expected it to act.

With such clean-cut organization, we should want to say that the unions were ready to make written agreements which could be filed in some public office, which agreements would be backed like any other business agreement, not only by the reputation, but by the property, of the organization making such agreements. If we were setting about to fully explain in a friendly way the advantages of complete unionization of industry, we should explain that every representative of the union who approached an employer was prepared to furnish that employer with a statement showing completely the authority with which he acted. Such credentials would set forth his exact authority and would show the organization which he represented. Where such action depended upon the acceptance of local unions, it would show the endorsement procedure required even down to the certified statement of the votes taken in ratifying such agreements.

We would make it clear that there would be no expectation that an employer would be asked to accept an agreement not properly endorsed by the organization and individuals whom it was proposed to bind. It would be fully explained that if it became necessary to force agreements upon an unwilling employer, the unions would still follow the practice of furnishing certificates fully setting forth authorities by which they acted.

In such presentation to the public, we would wish to say

that all the terms in discussing the merits of unionism were clearly understood by the public in exactly the same way that they are understood by the unions. It would be desirable to define clearly such terms as "right to organize," "fair conditions," "representatives of their own choosing" and "willingness to work with unorganized labor."

It would be most helpful in such publicity if we could make it clear that the employer is the aggressor in to-day's labor situation. We could not go back into old time, because it would not be frank to discuss conditions of the past when we are dealing with the present. It would be helpful to make it clear that labor must be and is in need of defense from unscrupulous and aggressive employers. We must explain to the public that the existence of any body of men not strictly unionized is a menace to the safety of labor. That is, we must explain that the ideal situation will result from complete unionism, and from this point we must explain to the public that such a complete control or monopoly of labor will not be used in the ugly way in which monopolies of food, of money or of commodity have been commonly used. We will have to make it clear that the situation that develops from this ideal condition of complete unionization of labor will be generously and intelligently used in a broad-minded care of the public good, and that it cannot and must not be used solely for class advantage.

If we were a publicity adviser, working with this problem of presenting the advantages of unionism to the American people, it would be very helpful to state that the partial realization of the ideal has aroused the enthusiasm of employees, employers and the public. The employees have found that the complete control of labor in given localities and in given industries has worked not only to an increase of their incomes and leisure, but to an increase of their self-respect and to better and pleasanter relations with their employers. Such relationships have not only strengthened the bonds of sympathy between the employer and the employee in the industries, thus increasing the pleasure of the every-day relationship between the workman and his employer, but have also increased the self-respect and the general value as a citizen of the majority of the members of the unions.

We should want to say that as the strength of the unions has increased in any locality or in any industry, more and more they have devoted their energies to the establishing of agreeable relationships in the shops in which their men work day by day.

We would wish to say that as the attention of the unions can be diverted from the aggression of the employers, their attention has been increasingly given to the problems of social betterment, to the improvement of the working conditions of the women, to the proper handling of the problem of the child worker, to the subject of proper educational facilities, and to the general broadening of the horizon of their members.

With a clear understanding of the truth of these statements, the American public would understand that here was a great engine for industrial and national improvement, — an organization whose works were so good and whose aims were so broad and so high that any intelligent, patriotic employer should eagerly wish to accept their theories, not only because the interest of his employees would be safeguarded, their minds stimulated and their workmanship improved, but that as a result of these things his own relations with his men would be improved, his problems simplified, and as a result his interests safeguarded. With such belief spread through this country, there would be an overwhelming demand for the unionization of industry. Officers of unions would have time to devote themselves to constructive thinking about the social and economical improvement of their membership, as they would be freed from defending their men from the aggression of the employer.

I have tried to indicate in this talk a few of the things that we would wish to say if we were publicity advisers for the American unions. When we came to study the actual conditions and the actual methods employed, it might develop that some of these statements would not be available for publicity purposes. If it were desirable to make any of these statements, then the wish to make them might indicate the paths which our clients would follow in leading the American public to a full appreciation of their efforts.

CHAS. R. GOW.*

Most of you are aware that for a considerable portion of the past year I have been somewhat offensively active in attacking many of the aims and policies of organized labor. My criticisms, however, have been directed not in a personal sense against any individual or any group of men, but rather against the philosophy which they have chosen to adopt. I have had in my experience probably a better opportunity for contact with men prominent in the labor movement than possibly a great majority of you gentlemen have had, and I am glad to say that in that connection I have met many men who are equally as likable fellows as are Mr. Johnson and Mr. Gauld, who I know must have impressed you most favorably. On the other hand, I have met occasional hard-boiled characters among the labor men; but I could undoubtedly find their counterparts among the employing class in the industry, and I doubt if the proportion would vary materially. I have no intention of going into personalities, and no desire to stigmatize any particular group in the industry, but wish only to express frankly and earnestly a criticism fundamental to the whole situation. It is an economic one. It is this:

Engineers have recognized always that a man cannot lift himself up by his boot straps over a 6-ft. wall. You cannot make water run up hill of its own volition, nor can you have your cake and eat it too. This, it seems to me, organized labor has attempted to do, and this I criticize. Theirs is a philosophy fundamentally unsound, and until it is corrected they cannot expect to rehabilitate the industry in its rightful position where everybody can work with them.

Getting down to the question of wages, it seems to me, if any man will look at the matter fairly and squarely he will realize that a wage, no matter how small or how large, is of value only to the extent that it may be exchanged for personal service or commodities. If you cannot so exchange it, it is of no value and its amount is a matter of no consequence. The value of every commodity is represented by the aggregate value of all service which

* Chas. R. Gow Company, 6 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

has gone into its production, manufacture and distribution. It is the aggregate value of all the service which has been expended upon it, regardless of whether that service has been over- or under-valued in its several divisions. Therefore it stands to reason that the total value of all the commodities produced in a given period is the total value which has been placed upon the personal services in the form of income. It may be clearly demonstrated, therefore, that wages are merely a convenient medium by which one man can exchange his services for the services of somebody else. If you or I receive a definite amount of money in our envelopes on Saturday night, it is simply a convenient medium by which we can purchase the services of somebody who has made shoes or raised foodstuffs, clothing, or something else which we need and which we cannot produce ourselves. It ought to be perfectly clear, it seems to me, that if everybody, regardless of the nature of their services, had their wages raised say 100 per cent. all at the same time, the result obviously would be that the value of all commodities would be automatically doubled coincident with this doubling of pay. In that case none of us would be any better off financially, since all of us could buy only one half of what we bought before for the same amount. An additional burden would fall, however, upon the man temporarily unemployed, the man with his money invested at a fixed percentage, the widows and orphans, — all such people living on a fixed income, or upon their savings, would be only one half as well off as they previously were. That would be the net result.

Conversely, suppose everybody's income was to be decreased 50 per cent. simultaneously. Everybody would receive one half as much as previously and the cost of commodities would automatically be reduced in the same proportion. Now, when these gentlemen speak of their demands for the 50 per cent. increase which was presented to their employers some months ago, I wonder if they have given any consideration to the economic effect in case it had been granted. I noticed in a paper I was reading to-day a report from the National Bureau of Economic Research, which stated that the proportion of labor to profit is placed at approximately 80 and 20 per cent. In other words, 80 per cent. on the average represents what is paid out in labor

wage, and 20 per cent. the proportion distributed in the form of profits among the several individuals who serve in the rôle of employers. Now, assume that conditions warranted a demand on the part of labor that their wages should be increased 50 per cent., — in other words, from \$1 to \$1.50 per hour. That would mean that if no additional increase was taken in added profit the cost of commodities affected by this labor would increase 40 per cent. The laborer would receive 50 per cent. and would apparently be 10 per cent. better off with this wage than before. But, of course, as soon as such a cost adjustment takes place the engineer, the architect, the doctor, the lawyer, the public official, the store clerk, the employers of those men — and everybody else who had to live — would realize that their standard of living had been reduced, because the cost of commodities which they needed had gone up 40 per cent. and their incomes had not been increased, so that they would immediately demand a similar advance. That is just what happened during the past few years. Before the war ended such a large proportion of our people had secured an increase of 100 per cent. or more in their income that the cost of living also increased 100 per cent. This didn't hold true in some specific cases. Some received a greater increase and some less. If the situation had continued long enough an approximate level would have been struck, and that is what is bound to happen whenever you attempt to meet that sort of condition by an increase in incomes. You cannot beat the fundamental law of supply and demand. I know that is an objectionable phrase to a great many people, but it is an economic truth that we cannot escape.

Now, the fact of the matter is that the immediate trouble to-day with the construction industry seems to be that we cannot get down to economic cost levels. That is the reason we are not progressing, that we are not able to build buildings. We cannot build them cheaply enough to permit the man who wants to build to do so. He is the one in the final analysis who determines whether he is able to build or not, and it is not a situation where he can be compelled to build at an arbitrary price, but rather one of building at his price or not at all. The owner will not build, and should not do so, unless he can obtain a satisfactory return

on his investment. If he will not build and we have no work, what difference does it make what wages these men may get on paper? Suppose you grant \$1.50 an hour and there is little or no work. It might well be that a wage of 50c. an hour would in a year bring a greater total income, — a yearly income, — with a large volume of work than would the \$1.50 with only a scant amount of work available, because of the prohibitive cost.

That is the situation which confronts all of us. It confronts the employer as well as the laborer. At the present time, if I am any judge, and I can speak from personal experience, — the employer to a large extent is no longer concerned with how much profit he is going to make, but with how little loss he can escape. In other words, he has been forced to deflate because there is no device or method by which he can fix his cost and effect an agreement with the owner or builder which compels him to comply with it. The material man has taken his reduction. Steel rods purchased a year ago for \$105 a ton were quoted recently at \$45. Lumber prices have dropped from \$75 to as low as \$35 a thousand feet. Cement purchased in 1920 at \$6 or \$7 a barrel has now been stabilized at \$2.60; and so on down the list, with a few exceptions. There are, I regret to say, a few lines of industry whose leaders apparently still cling to the same hope which actuates the labor unions, that somehow, by standing pat, prices can artificially be maintained at their former high level. My criticisms are directed equally against both classes.

It is extremely improbable that high prices could be retained even if we all desired such a result. For a great many years we fought vigorously against the rising cost of living. We elected men to office who promised to put a stop to it; we had meetings, elections and committees; we passed resolutions and enacted new laws, and still the cost of living kept on rising just the same. That was not a new experience. It happened before at least twice in the history of this country, since records have been kept, and those records have been available for our information for many years. We had a period of high commodity costs in 1812, at the time of the war with England, — the Napoleonic Wars. Prices mounted to substantially the same peak as in recent years. Then there was a long period of falling prices, falling labor costs,

falling rents and falling costs for everything which covered a period of thirty years, followed by rising prices for twenty years. The new generation began spending the money that the old conservative and thrifty generation had saved, and we had a period of extravagance and waste, which appeared to produce prosperity because of the large amount of money expended, and this process culminated in another peak of high prices at the time of the Civil War, almost identical with the former peak. Then came a reversal of the cycle, and the lowest level of prices ever recorded was reached in 1896 and 1897, or thereabouts. Another twenty-year period of rising prices culminated in this terrible situation we have just passed through.

It is useless to attempt to stem the tide of economic events by ignoring them or by burying our heads in the sand or passing resolutions or organizing against them, unless we remove the fundamental causes. A study of these recurring cycles shows clearly that when we have general waste and extravagance in our affairs we produce what appears to be prosperity. The greater volume of buying naturally produces a demand for commodities, and this demand calls for more labor. Demand for labor brings higher wages, higher profits, and higher costs; but, when we reach a certain point in the inflation process, economic limitations bring the movement to a stop, and we turn the corner only to follow the downward route again. My sole criticism of organized labor is that it attempts to disregard and prevent these fundamental laws.

It is a fact that the general trend of wages has, generally speaking, been upward for one hundred and twenty years. There have been violent fluctuations, but the average line will show a gradual upward tendency. There was a substantial rise and subsequent fall of wages during and after the Civil War period, and a less pronounced similar movement at other periods. Nevertheless the net movement has been upward. The one thing which has made this result possible has been the very thing which organized labor has always strenuously fought against, — the introduction of labor-saving devices. Any agency which increases production releases a certain number of men from that industry, who are gradually absorbed in other productive lines.

the net result being that a greater total of commodities is produced which gives to each individual a larger per capita share. For instance, if we were a group cast away on an island it would require perhaps 25 or 30 of us to secure the daily food supply for the entire party. Now, suppose some one of us who was exceptionally clever in woodcraft should devise an ingenious method by which we could secure double the amount of food which had previously been possible. The result would be that we could immediately dispense with one half of the men employed for this purpose and distribute their services among the remaining groups who would be occupied with other tasks. It is easy to see, under these conditions, that each member of the entire party would then receive just as good a living as before, but would not have to work quite as hard because there would be more individuals to share in the work.

It is difficult for the individual to understand the application of this principle to our complex type of civilization, but that is what actually happens. The introduction of the cotton gin brought the cost of cotton cloth down to one tenth of its former price, and this was the equivalent of a raise in wages for every one who used cotton goods.

The thing which has disturbed me more than anything else in the attitude of labor organizations has been the general tendency to impose absurd rules requiring the services of two or more men to do one man's work. This practice must inevitably result in increasing the cost of the commodity, whatever it may be. It is absolutely unsound in principle, and can only serve to react against the best interests of the entire community, labor included.

There is no simple and attractive cure for our present business and social troubles. Only by a rigid adherence to sound economic principles can we re-establish normal conditions, and this is bound to be accomplished only when we are willing to accept lower wages, lower profits and lower costs of commodities. We may attempt to apply artificial expedients to prevent the operation of natural laws, but it is inevitable that they will ultimately prevail, and our efforts in opposition can only result in prolonging present unsatisfactory conditions.

MR. JOHNSON.—The last speaker* brought out a particular point I have heard brought out before, and I should like to answer him. He says labor unions prohibit one mechanic from doing another mechanic's work. We have some mechanics that follow other trades, — bricklayers do plastering, carpenters do it also, and there are other examples. But they must live up to the particular craft union that they are working under at the time.

If any of you are in possession of a copy of the chart compiled by the Building Congress you will find that we took that particular phase of the industry, and we found that it is not very acceptable to the employer. We found many employers not only figure their work on the estimate of what work can be accomplished, but that they figure it on the particular men they are going to put on that work. They know when figuring that particular work that Jim, John or Tom are to be on that job, and they are going to have him on that job.

We have to have a standing army on hand, and we never know what demand is going to be placed on it, and we always have to have men on demand of the employers, and if we are going to allow them to be shunted about on different kinds of work we must have some guaranty. We have four 'phones in headquarters, and in normal times it takes two men to answer these 'phones. One day we will have a call for fifty mechanics, and the next for one hundred and fifty. No one knows on how many days of the year he is going to be called upon, and we can't have men doing different kinds of work.

* Mr. E. S. Larned.

MEMOIR OF DECEASED MEMBER.

ROY C. AIKEN.*

ROY COBB AIKEN was born at Park Hill, Westmoreland, N. H., April 5, 1872, and died at the Waltham Hospital, June 24, 1921. He was educated in the public schools, followed later by a course in the evening schools and also a course at Bryant & Stratton Commercial School.

During the greater portion of his life he was engaged upon various public works in the Metropolitan District.

In 1894 he began work as rodman and transitman in the city engineer's office in Newton; from 1896 to 1898 was with the city of Cambridge on the construction of the Hobbs Brook water supply; in 1899, with the Harbor and Land Commission on the state line survey; in 1900, with the Boston Elevated Railway Company; from 1900 to 1902, with the Metropolitan Sewerage Commission; from 1902 to 1908, with the Boston Transit Commission; from 1908 to 1910, with the Charles River Basin Commission; in 1918 and 1919, at the Army Base, South Boston.

He was also employed as clerk of works and superintendent of construction by various architects and engineers, among whom were Blackall, Clapp & Whittemore and Aspinwall & Lincoln.

He married Gertrude Geraldine Garside, who survives him, together with four children, — three sons and a daughter.

Mr. Aiken became a member of the Boston Society of Civil Engineers in November, 1900. He was a frequent attendant at the meetings and enjoyed the opportunity of mingling with his associates engaged in similar work. He was a member of the Congregational Church and of the Monitor Lodge of Masons in Waltham.

Mr. Aiken was a man of a quiet and retiring nature, diligent and conscientious in all his work, and always ready to subordinate his own convenience to the requirements of his employment.



* Memoir prepared by John L. Howard.

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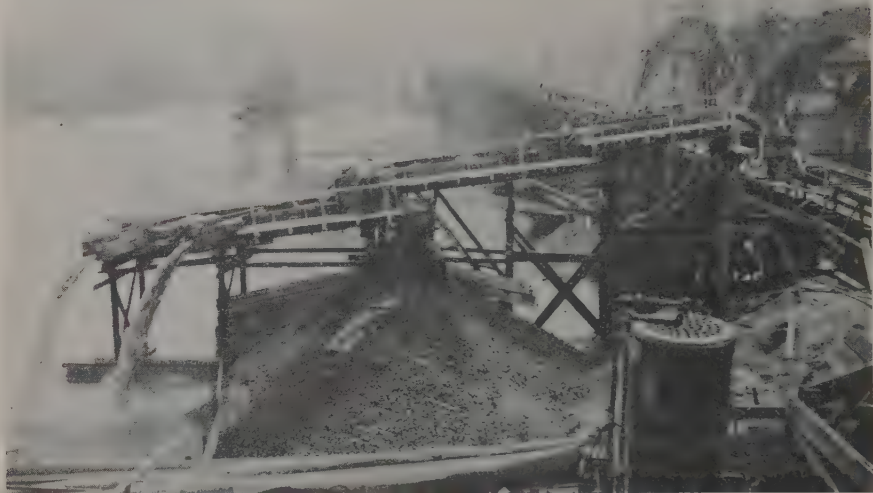
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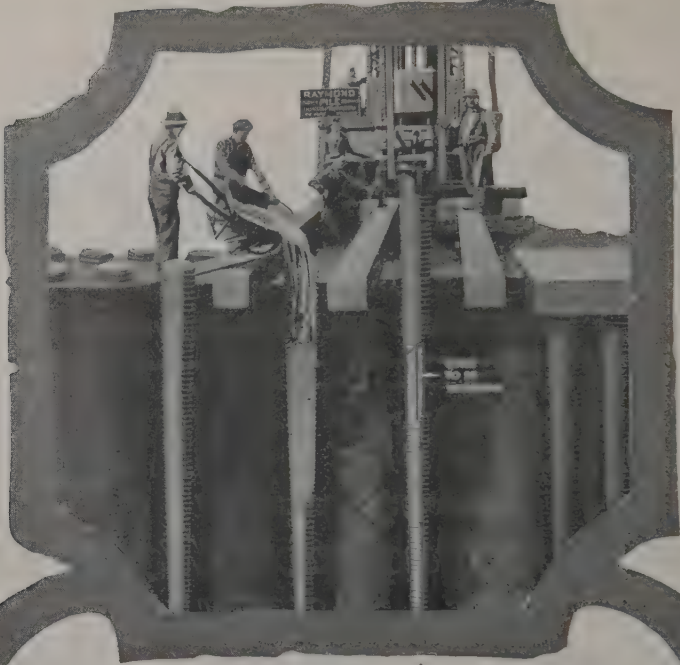
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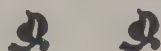
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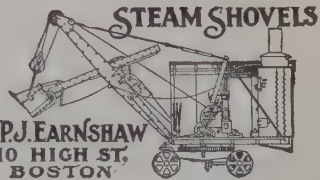
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